In the waning years of his life, Galileo proposed a theory. This theory claimed that the Sun did not revolve around the Earth, but in fact, that the Earth revolved around the Sun. This thinking landed Galileo into hot water with the authority of the day, the Catholic Church, and his sentence was house arrest. Seven years later, still living out his sentence at home, Galileo passed away. Shortly after his death the church admitted that Galileo might have been correct in his theory (Stillman, Drake, Galileo at Work: His Scientific Biography. This begs the question, why must we punish people in society for unconventional thinking? If it weren’t for unconventional thinking, our world would be stuck in neutral in a permanent dark age.

From Galileo's heliocentric postulates to Henry Ford and his Model T to Bill Gates with Microsoft; ambitious thinkers have pushed towards the boundaries of thought for countless millennia. Society often expresses contrary views about its luminaries: on the one hand, progress is encouraged and expected. However, there are some (like Galileo's Church) that suppress such thinking, in order to maintain the norm. What we have accomplished today, however, are the results of these ideas becoming commonplace. What if the tooth-brush had never come around? The television? The jet plane? Where exactly would we be if all that we did was only the bare minimum to survive, developing only the most essential components to build our cities, and enrich our cultures? We would be no more than cavemen wandering around forests in search of our next meal. But when you think of it on an even deeper level would we even be there? We would not even have people to be innovative enough to catch the prey, to chase a herd of buffalo off a cliff or to force an elephant into a pit.

One extreme appeared in the annals of history, during one of the darkest periods of human existence. The mid-1930's saw the rise of Hitler, and the advent of the Holocaust. The systematic eradication of an entire race of people began in Germany, while the rest of world looked on in oblivious neutrality. Over 11 million (Non-Jewish Victims of the Holocaust · Five Million Forgotten, Terese Pencak Schwartz)innocent people were left to die, because the world looked on and asked “why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?”(Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury, pg. 56). Without a second thought we let this happen, and today we are letting it happen again. Every week we observe media coverage about the genocide in Darfur. Some of us may give our pocket change, maybe even a few dollars for “the cause”. Do any of us know what the cause really is?

In the words of the Indigo Girls from the song “Galileo”, “Galileo’s head was on the block, the crime was looking up for the truth, and as the bombshells of my daily fears explodes, I try to trace them to my youth” I don’t want to make the same mistake as the Catholic Church, by, not admitting that one is permitted to be correct in their thinking, even if it is “wrong” to do so; I want to ensure that we promote unconventional thinking, and allow our society's boldest thinkers to express their thoughts freely. We are all selfish in one way or another; we even have books “to remind us what asses and fools we are” (Bradbury, 86). Galileo was not only a remarkable astronomer but he was often times poetic in expressing his views; “I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.” ([Galileo Galilei](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/14190.Galileo_Galilei)). Perhaps, if we learned to be more tolerant, and more accepting of change, and encourage progress instead of stifling it, we'd end up better, as a whole, for it.